Vol. X., No. 9. DECEMBER, 1920.

THE MODERN CHURCHMAN

A Magazine to maintain the cause of
TRUTH, FREEDOM, and COMPREHENSIVENESS
in the Church of England.

EDITOR: REV. H. D. A. MAJOR, B.D.

CONTENTS:

	PAGE
Facing the Future .. .. The Editor.	455
Changeless Faith and Changing Thought .. Canon M. G. Glazebrook, D.D.	461
The Spirit of Christian Adventure .. .. Maurice Pryke, B.D.	468
The Position of the Modern Churchman ..	478
Mr. H. G. Wells and the History of Religion .. G. Milner, M.A.	484
The Origin of the Churchmen's Union .. .. P. H. Bagenal, O.B.E.	490
Reviews:	
Primitive Christianity .. .. J. M. Creed, M.A.	495
A Revised Prayer Book .. .. .. C. Emmet, B.D.	499
A Tonic for Failing Hearts .. .. .. J. F. Worsley Boden, M.A.	501

OXFORD: BASIL BLACKWELL, 49 BROAD STREET

Price 1/- net. Annual Subscription, 7/6.

THE MODERN CHURCHMAN

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THE

MODERN CHURCHMAN

By identifying the new learning with heresy, you make orthodoxy synonymous with ignorance.—*Erasmus.*

A State without the means of change is without the means of its conservation.—*Edmund Burke.*

No. 9. DECEMBER, 1920. Vol. X.

FACING THE FUTURE

By The Editor.

'THERE is no new thing under the sun' was the verdict of the writer of *Ecclesiastes*. For him human life was an endless repetition, a drab uniformity, a wearisome round, a mechanical performance, essentially unsatisfying to that buoyant, eager, restless, sensitive thing, the soul of man.

It is not surprising that he who wrote, 'There is no new thing under the sun,' also wrote, 'Vanity of vanities, all is vanity.' For it is not hard conditions, bitter sufferings, fierce struggles, that turn men into pessimists; it is the absence of all prospect of change, all hope of betterment. However comfortable, however pleasurable a man's circumstances, if there be no prospect of change, no new experience, nothing further to realise, he becomes a pessimist. He weeps because there are no new worlds to conquer. The pessimist who wrote *Ecclesiastes* describes a life many might envy: he had warmed both hands at its attractive fires; he had known in all their bewildering variety the delights of wealth, rank, culture, art, learning, and every form of sensuous enjoyment, but all had turned to ashes: a mystic hand had written on his palace wall, 'There is no new thing under the sun.' Life is a purposeless contrivance, and holds out no prospect of permanent betterment. 'That which is crooked cannot be made straight.' As that thought sunk into his soul, all hope died away, and he penned the words: 'Vanity of vanities, all is vanity.'

In marked contrast to the spirit of *Ecclesiastes* is the spirit of him who wrote: 'Behold, I make all things new.'[1] This man is not a weary worldling, but a Christian seer. Ease and wealth have not been his portion. He is a prophet of a despised and persecuted religious community, but one which lived in the presence of tremendous possibilities. Its eyes were fixed on a future big with hope. It believed in a Divine plan, in which it was to play no inconspicuous part; wonderful things were to be looked for in its fulfilment. The spirit of these early Christians was like that of the soldier of the French Revolution, who wrote in his memoirs: 'We were as men marching into the dawn.' They were members of an ever-victorious army, their leader was the Christ, going forth conquering and to conquer; new triumphs and fresh achievements awaited them. Their present lot might be one of hardship and self-denial, but their hearts were full of inextinguishable joy. Why? A modern scholar explains:

'Jesus had brought them into a new world of possibilities.'

They had heard a voice from the throne of God, that God whose soldiers and servants they were, a voice pealing through earth and heaven:

'Behold, I make all things new.'

There are a number of people to-day who seem to think that the Gospel of Jesus was a sort of *réchauffé* of Jewish prophetism, Oriental scepticism, Hellenistic speculation—various old things cleverly collected and cunningly combined—and that this image with feet of clay, body of iron and front of brass conquered the Roman Empire. The Christian Church certainly showed extraordinary syncretistic power, but it was not this power, but the spirit of Christian faith, Christian hope, Christian love—Christ's gift to His disciples—which gave the Church its power to conquer.

The Gospel of Jesus was a new thing in the ancient world. The first hearers of Jesus, so our earliest Evangelist records,[2] were quick to recognize its newness. They exclaimed with amazement, 'What is this: a new teaching?' The academic Athenians recognized the same note in St. Paul's message. 'May we know what this new teaching is, which is spoken by

[1] Rev. xxi, 5. [2] Mk. i, 27.

thee?' is their polite request to the apostle. Christ himself made no effort to conceal the fact that His Gospel was new. He spoke of it to the Pharisees as the 'new wine' which would burst 'old bottles'; and to his disciples He referred to it as 'the new covenant.'[3]

Christ's disciples emphasized this newness. They called Jesus 'the Mediator of the New Covenant'[4]; they called themselves the Ministers of the New Covenant—a covenant, they affirmed, written not 'in oldness of the letter,' but 'in the newness of the spirit.'[5] He who received it walked in 'newness of life.'[6] Of such it was said, 'If any man be in Christ, he is a new creation; the old things are passed away; behold they are become new.'[7] For he became obedient to a new commandment: 'Love one another'[8]; he entered into a new experience, a renewal of the mind.[9]

No New Testament writer emphasizes the newness of the Christian experience more than does the author of the Book of the Revelation. For him every possession and privilege of the Christian is new. He that overcometh receives 'a new name,' because he has received a new nature (ii, 17), and God reveals Himself to such by His New Name, for a new nature perceives new aspects of God (iii, 12). The Christian is given 'a new song'—a song of thanksgiving to the Lamb for his redemption (v, 9). He is enrolled as the citizen of a new city —'the New Jerusalem' (iii, 12; xxi, 2) in which God dwells ever with its citizens. The Christian looks forward to 'a new heaven and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness,' and into which neither sin, nor sorrow, nor death, can enter (xxi, 1). But the climax is reached when the seer hears the proclamation from Him that sitteth on the throne: 'Behold, I make all things new' (xxi, 5).

It is this newness of the Christian experience which is one undoubted note of the religion of Christ, and one of its sources of influence.

'No legend old, no fable hoar,
Of bygone hopes and fears,
No dead fact stranded on the shore,
Of the oblivious years.'

[3] Lk. xxii, 20; *cf.* Mk. xiv, 24; Mt. xxvi, 28.
[4] Heb. xii, 24.
[5] II. Cor. iii, 6.
[6] Rom. vi, 4.
[7] II. Cor. v, 17; Gal. vi, 15.
[8] John xiii, 34.
[9] Rom. xii, 2; Titus iii, 3.

Though ancient, it is not antiquated. It possesses an extraordinary power of renewal. Unlike many other religions, the religion of Christ is not the slave of old scriptures, old traditions, old customs, old methods, least of all of old superstitions—at least, it ought not to be. Its authority is the ever-present Spirit of Truth and Love. Hence the Christian's glance is forward, not backward—at least, it ought to be. In so far as he is a vital Christian, new life is surging through his veins, new aspirations are swelling in his heart, new ideals are creating themselves in his mind, a spirit of renewal is transforming his nature—a spirit of undying hope and of self-denying love.

Whilst the Christian Church had this spirit things went well with it, but in scarce two centuries the letter began to replace the spirit; dogma began to replace faith; tradition began to replace inspiration, and the conviction that God was making all things new was replaced by the conviction that it was the primary duty of the Christian Church to contend very earnestly for 'the old faith of our fathers.'[10] Thus the Church began to look for its support and authority in the past and not in the possession of the ever-present Spirit of God. It began to rely on ancient miracles and historic institutions, and not on present inspiration and power. It began to look back, not forward: and then the world began to close in upon it, and so in order to conquer the world, it began to adopt the ways of the world in preference to obeying the principles of Christ. Hence the advent of the new heavens and the new earth was postponed.

Christians are still looking for a new earth. We have heard a voice, if it came not from the throne of God, at least it came from the British Prime Minister: 'Behold, I make all things new.'

> 'The bricks are fallen, but we will build with hewn stone. The sycamores are cut down, but we will change them into cedars.'[11]

Howbeit the new earth, as it emerges from the welter of the war, looks uncommonly like the old.

Is there no remedy? Pessimism is futile; recrimination is futile; going on in the same old way is futile. We want some new thing, but we seem to be setting out in the wrong way

[10] *Cf.* Glover, *op. cit.*, p. 263.

[11] Isaiah ix, 10.

to get it. We want a new earth, but in order to get that we must have new heavens. A new human society has got to be built on *spiritual* foundations; but too many of us are trying to build it upon material foundations. We are adopting methods that have failed, and must fail. Appeals to self-interest; appeals to class-prejudice; appeals to violence; appeals to greed, malice, hatred, sloth, ignorance, are not going to help us, even though they be called by fine names, most of which terminate in *ation*. A new earth must be founded—not necessarily on Christian institutions, or Christian traditions, or Christian customs, but on Christian principles of conduct and Christian ideals of character. That is an excessively hard and laborious kind of building, but it is the only certain way of building the New Jerusalem, 'the city that hath the foundations.'

To be a Christian is not only to have the Spirit of Christ, it is also to believe in the principles of Christ.

Jesus worked at this task of making all things new. How did He begin? He began by co-operating with God. That is to say, He began from above. He looked first to His Father in heaven, for the spirit and power to win the world to God. Are the builders of a new world looking there? Secondly, Jesus approached human life from inside, not from outside. He strove to touch the heart, awaken the conscience, enlighten the understanding, strengthen the will. That way has much to commend it, for, as a Swiss professor observed: 'It is in the soul that things happen.' When they happen there, they are repeated outside. If a man's soul is washed, he will wash his body. If a man gives his will to God, he will do his part in making this world God's world. Thirdly, Jesus addressed Himself to the individual rather than to the mass. He believed not in the mass movement, but in the case system. The individual is for Him the point of departure.

Now that is His method, *from above, from within, one by one*—very slow, very exacting, but secure of success. The City of God is built primarily on human personalities. Institutions and legislation are important, but secondary. Jesus did not begin with them; He began by putting the personality of the individual into its right relationship of sonship to God.

Unless the man who wants to make all things new can do that in the case of his own personality and that of others, he has no prospect of real success, no security for the stability and permanence of his work.

There can be no new earth until there be a new heaven, or rather until there be a new contact between earth and heaven—not the heaven of Jewish cosmogonies, nor of mediaeval scholastics, but the heaven of Jesus, so that the Spirit of the Divine Father can flow into and renew the spirit of man.

The Emperor Marcus Aurelius wrote:

> 'The rational soul wanders round the whole world and through the encompassing void, and gazes into infinite time, and considers the periodic destruction and rebirth of the Universe, and reflects that our posterity will see nothing new' (xi, 1).

The seer of the Apocalypse writes:

> 'I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away . . . And I, John, saw the Holy City, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven. . . . And I heard a great voice out of the throne saying, Behold the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them and be their God, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away.'

Here we have philosophy irreconcilably opposed to Christian faith, and reason in hopeless antagonism to Christian hope. Yet there are 'reasons and reasons,' and those neither childish nor unscientific, which suggest that the Seer of Revelation saw deeper into essential truth and further into the future than did either the Hebrew Wisdom writer or the Stoic Emperor.

The seer proclaims the real Advent Hope of humanity, of which archangel trumps and judgment thrones, terrestrial woes and celestial visions, are but the symbolic prelude.

'Faith,' as a modern scholar writes, 'is not belief in spite of evidence,' but 'a courageous trust in the great purpose of all things.' Dare we Modern Churchmen steer our course by this to the far horizon, rather than by the familiar landmarks on the rapidly receding shores of the old world?

CHANGELESS FAITH AND CHANGING THOUGHT

By Canon M. G. Glazebrook, D.D.

CHEMISTS used to teach us that the smallest objects were molecules, made up of two atoms of different species, which were united firmly until some more powerful element attracted one of the partners, and formed with it a new union. In like manner a religious belief is normally made up of two elements—a fact of religious experience, and the interpretation which is given to that experience by the thought of one age or another. The facts remain permanent, but thought changes from generation to generation. A time comes in the history of each molecule of belief when a new philosophy claims to supersede the former, and unite with the religious fact in a new presentation. Men in general, not distinguishing between the two constituents of their belief, regard the claim of the new philosophy as an attack upon religion, instead of being, as it is, a tribute to its value. Those who so misunderstand are responsible for many of the tragedies of religious history. Those who understand may help the cause of religious progress, and save many of their brothers from suffering and loss.

Such an abstract statement needs to be explained by means of examples. When a new object or event is presented to us, quite different from all of which we have experience, we are compelled to describe it to ourselves or to others in terms of what we know. We have all heard stories of the curious terms in which simple barbarians have tried to describe the implements of civilized visitors. What they were doing was to fit the new fact into the frame of their simple philosophy, in order to relate it to the rest of their ideas. He who calls a rifle a fire-stick, for instance, though he misses the main fact of its use, does give a rude picture of its appearance. In like manner civilized man, when some great new thought or personality comes before him, tries to connect it with the world of his

existing ideas by some new application of familiar terms. Very often those terms prove to be unsuitable, and are soon discarded. But sometimes error is not discovered before the fact and the mistaken phrase have been so welded together that they seem to constitute a single idea: and so the combination remains, to be a stumbling block to later generations.

An example of such cohesion may be found in a famous chapter of Isaiah. Meditating upon the sad history of Israel, the prophet was suddenly struck by the paradox of their fate. The chosen people of Jehovah, the depositaries of true religion, the model of a superior morality, they had suffered more than any other nation. Torn from their homes, exiled, enslaved, tortured and mocked, they had endured with patience and born witness to the truth. But to what purpose? How could their agony consist with divine justice? The solution was found in the word sacrifice. The sufferings of Israel were a piacular sacrifice for the sins of other nations, even of his oppressors. Israel was the victim laid on the world's altar to make atonement for all. To us the explanation is not convincing: but it satisfied a generation who thought in terms of sacrifice. The principle of vicarious suffering became an accepted part of their system. Nay, more. The prophet's words, applied to an individual instead of the nation, were eagerly adopted by the first generation of Christians when they sought language to explain the marvellous change of which they were conscious when they became followers of the Crucified. Taught by St. Paul, they rejoiced to believe that their sins were forgiven because a Divine Victim had suffered in their place. So the crucifixion was fitted into the framework of Jewish philosophy, and the union was so firmly compacted that to many subsequent generations the event and the sacrificial theory have appeared to constitute a single truth. Not a hundred years have passed since men began to plead that the historical fact and the Jewish philosophy should be separated, because their union was inconsistent with a true conception of God's nature and justice: and even yet the plea is often resented, as if it were an attack upon religion.

There is also another side to the process of which we are thinking. Not only are new experiences fitted into the frame

of old philosophy: old facts are often fitted into a new philosophy. A little reflection shows that to be inevitable, for every fresh generation has its own way of looking at the world—a way which is learned not by any conscious process, but by the mere influence of circumstance and association. The young breathe in, to use our common but expressive phrase, the ideas which are in the air, and their mental constitution is largely determined thereby. It is the more thoughtful and intelligent who are most sensitive to such influences. Whether they are students or not, they accept, as they grow up, the system of opinion which is coming into fashion: they treat the dominant philosophy, however little they really understand it, as a frame into which all facts, old or new, must be fitted. And we have to remember that, in a very real sense, the oldest facts come to the young as new, when they first hear them or first grasp their importance. Now I am far from saying that a new philosophy is sure to be better than its predecessor. But as a rule it is based on a wider experience, it takes account of facts hitherto neglected, and it provides a language in which the new generation can express its deeper thought. Whether they will or not, they cannot but think in terms of the new system. The consequence is obvious. Average men of the older generation, having come to regard the religious experience in question and the forms of thought in which it was framed as one solid truth, regard those who wish to remove the old frame and fit on the new—or, as we often say, to restate the religious truth—as destroyers of the truth itself. How many of the tragedies of religious history spring from no other cause!

The same difficulty may arise when dogmas, which have been developed by one people, pass to another, whose mode of thought is different. The Jews in Alexandria in the last three centuries before our era, enriched their own doctrine of God by grafting upon it a Greek conception, derived partly from Plato and partly from the Stoics. The word or wisdom of God, as described in *Proverbs*, *Ecclesiasticus*, and *Wisdom*, is a creative power, so nearly distinct that we should almost call it a second person of the Godhead. St. Paul, in writing to the Colossians, and the unknown author of the Hebrews, applied the language of Wisdom to our Lord, and the author of the

Fourth Gospel put the coping-stone upon their dogmatic building when he wrote, 'The Word was made flesh.' So Greek philosophy furnished the form of thought which the Church first used to describe the Incarnation. But it did a further service. The fathers of the Church, who were responsible for the composition of the Nicene Creed were, for the most part, under the influence of the dominant philosophy of their time, which was that of Plotinus. The presentation of the Trinity in the Nicene Creed, while it maintains the Logos Doctrine, bears no little resemblance to that of Plotinus—partly in its phrases, partly in the subordination of Son and Spirit to the Father. The Creed, as we repeat it in the Communion Service, is the fruit of three hundred years of Greek meditation and discussion. It centres in the paragraph which describes the nature of the Son—creator,[1] redeemer and mediator. From the conversion of St. Augustine, the centre of gravity of the Church began to be transferred from the Greek speaking to the Latin speaking peoples. Now, whereas the Greek mind was trained in philosophy, the Latin mind was trained in law. The Roman, the Gaul, the African, had no taste for metaphysical speculation about the nature of God and of ultimate reality. They were concerned with rights, with offences and their punishment, with sin and atonement. Naturally this legal temper found expression in a new Creed. The so-called Athanasian Creed contrasts strangely with the Nicene. It repudiates the subordination of the earlier Creed, and asserts the equality of the three Persons in language whose paradoxical antitheses remind us of the popular Latin hymns. Its very use of the word Person, usually avoided by the Greeks, is expressive of the change which substituted law for philosophy.

Time forbids me to trace the consequences of the altered view, which is typified by the Athanasian Creed. I can but barely state that the Logos doctrine almost disappeared for centuries, happily to be restored to our own generation, and the mediatorial office was transferred from Christ to the Virgin Mary.

[1] The English version of the Creed, 'By whom all things were made,' gives a wrong impression. The preposition used in the Greek implies that the Son is the *agent* of creation, '*through* whom all things were made,' while the Father is the *Maker* of all things. Unfortunately there is only one noun in English—creator—to express both conceptions.

I must not linger to speak of the scholastic philosophy, that firm conglomerate of Greek and Jewish thought with Roman law and Christian experience, which is still the basal system of the Roman Church, nor of the earlier reactions against it. We must think of our own times.

Up to about 1870 the Church of England, following St. Paul and St. Augustine and the Schoolmen, regarded the Fall of Adam as one of the foundation-stones of religion. With the story of Adam, it was taught, the whole doctrine of redemption was so bound up, that to doubt the former was to renounce the latter. I well remember the horror with which I received the first suggestion that man, instead of being created perfect, had in fact risen from an animal ancestry. I remember, too, hearing fierce denunciations of Darwin and his disciples as the enemies of all religion. Yet I have lived, not only to accept the theory of evolution myself, but also to see it adopted by all the more enlightened champions of Christian faith in England, who now find in it a bulwark of defence. The crisis through which we passed had its deep sorrows. How many hearts of parents were broken, to see their sons rejecting what appeared to them an essential truth? How many hearts of children were hardened against Christianity, because their elders insisted that it could not stand without the Jewish legend of the Fall? Yet surely the gain is greater than the loss. For those who accept the principle of evolution are able to restate the truth of the Atonement in terms which do not involve aspersions upon the divine justice: and they find in the hopeful view of human nature which it presents one of the strongest arguments against those ascetic theories of the past which reflected so seriously upon the Divine Wisdom.

That is one example of the way in which the philosophy of our age is detaching some religious truths from their old Jewish or Greek setting, and framing them anew. I say philosophy, for the distinction between science and philosophy is artificial, and harmful to both alike. In the higher sense philosophy includes both physics and metaphysics.

The theory of evolution, then, belongs to philosophy; but it does not constitute a system in itself, as some people seem to fancy. It does not touch those ultimate questions which reli-

gion and metaphysics both attempt to answer. Nay, it is consistent with quite a different conception of the universe : and is actually held alike by men who believe in none but material causes, by men who believe God to be the author of the whole universe, and by men who believe in a creative principle of unity which is neither material nor divine, but an undefinable Absolute. It is held, again, no less by those who regard the universe as ultimately one, and by those who see in it a battlefield between two opposing powers.

What does this matter to us? Are we not content with Christian doctrine on the one hand, and scientific truth on the other? Such contentment is delusive. For, whether we like it or not, Christian doctrine, as it has changed in the past, will continue to change in the future. The extinct philosophies must pass away from the molecules of dogma which they now help to form, and be replaced by new elements of thought. So to our grandchildren some truths will wear a different aspect from that which they present to us, because they will be expressed in terms of the new philosophy which they will draw in with their breath.

What will that philosophy be? That has to be determined in the next twenty years. At present we cannot say that there is a dominant philosophy, which is as widely accepted as was Neo-Platonism in the fourth century, or Scholasticism in the thirteenth, or Scientific Materialism in the nineteenth. What we see, if we look below the surface, is a struggle between several rivals. Materialism is not dead. Idealism, in various forms, claims the adherence of Christians. The dualistic doctrines of Bergson and the Pragmatists invite us to believe that a Godless universe is growing and advancing, it knows not how or whither.

Who can look upon their rivalry unmoved? Only those who have not learned from the past how much the religion of the future must be influenced by that philosophy which proves victorious. To thinking men and women, therefore, philosophical speculation ought not to be (as men have often regarded it) an intellectual toy, which seems to have no bearing upon life. Rather it should be one of our most serious occupa-

tions: for upon each of us rests a grave responsibility. We can either promote the true, or accept the false. We can do something either to purify or to taint the religious faith of those who are to come.

While we think of others in the future, let us not forget the needs of the present. We and our friends are involved in the conflict between the old and the new philosophies. How shall we bear ourselves therein? We may learn something from the old story of Serapion. A pious and zealous monk, but unlearned, he shared the belief which prevailed among the simple Christians of some early centuries that God was in form and substance like to man, who was made in his image. Paphnutius and Photinus, an instructed priest and deacon, strove to rescue the saint from his error. Their arguments convinced him that God was a spiritual being, without body, parts, or passions: and they joined with the bystanders in rendering thanks to God that the saint had been converted to the Catholic faith. But in the midst of the prayer the old man, conscious of a void in the sanctuary of his heart, where he was wont to see a material God, was seized with sore distress. He threw himself on the ground, and cried out amid his sobs:

> 'Woe is me! They have taken away my God; and now I have none to take hold on, none to invoke, none to adore.'

In that touching story, as in a mirror, we may see an image perhaps of ourselves, certainly of some among our friends. If under the shock of new knowledge, we have never felt, as Serapion did, unable to readjust our faith, yet we shall do well to prepare ourselves in case such a crisis should come, that we may not fail to endure the test. And whatever be our personal experience, the tale of Serapion may teach us to be very tender to those who faint under such a trial. For when St. Paul wrote to the Romans, 'We that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak,' he stated a principle which applies not only to such outward things as eating and drinking and the observance of holy days, but also (and with even greater force) to the conclusions of the inner world, where thought is the imperfect and changeful vehicle of faith.

THE SPIRIT OF CHRISTIAN ADVENTURE

A Study in Early Quakerism

IT will be clear to every reader of the New Testament that the first followers of Jesus were filled with a spirit of high-hearted adventure which carried them forward undismayed to the stupendous task of a world's redemption. It will be evident also that this spirit was kindled in the lives of the original disciples by contact with the courageous personality of their Master. From Him they caught the contagion of a great enthusiasm, and wherever that enthusiasm has shown itself throughout the Christian centuries, its origin can be traced unerringly to the same vital relationship with a living Christ. 'One loving spirit sets another on fire.'[1]

The life of Jesus, giving as it does complete expression to the three fundamental truths of the Fatherhood of God, the brotherhood of man and the supreme duty of service, was of necessity a life of adventure, inevitably finding its culmination in the sorrowful triumph of Calvary. If it be true that 'the cross is more like Him than anything else He ever did,'[2] His own frank assertion that discipleship and suffering are inseparable is abundantly justified. In what has been aptly termed 'the divine adventure of the Incarnation'[3] nothing was certain beforehand except the suffering. 'The young Prince of Glory,'[4] pledged to the doing of His Father's will, is the greatest adventurer the world has known, the fitting leader of that company of daring spirits who, as Bunyan has it, will 'hazard all for God at a clap,' holding life cheap in the service of a great cause.[5]

The first friends of Jesus came at length to accept whole-

[1] St. Augustine. [2] T. R. Glover, *The Jesus of History*, p. 188.

[3] E. S. Woods, 'The Great Adventure,' an essay in *The Church in the Furnace*, p. 430.

[4] The phrase occurs in the original of the second line of Watts' hymn, 'When I survey the wondrous Cross.'

[5] For an admirable discussion of the fearlessness of Jesus in traversing the religious and social conventions of His age, see H. E. Fosdick, *The Manhood of the Master*, p. 92.

heartedly His own estimate of what discipleship involved. Endorsing the interpretation of life's meaning which He had given them, they, too, found in the doing of God's will the supreme motive for living. Like Jesus Himself they measured the value of the humblest human life by man's capacity for divine sonship; like Him they saw the world as a field for service; like Him they braced their shoulders to the weight of the cross, and, rejoicing in the splendour of their task, resolved, let the cost be what it might, to win mankind to His allegiance.

Thus, the Church of the first age was a little company of adventurers for Christ. The standard of values, the objective to be achieved, the spirit which inspired the work—all were His, and of His making. The power which turned the world upside down was the power of the living Christ; His presence was an intense reality to all His followers, and fellowship with Him the all-sufficient bond of union whereby the little society was held together. The 'Holy Spirit,' which directed alike the life of the individual and of the community, is termed explicitly 'the Spirit of Jesus'; from Him, as the leader and inspirer of every enterprise, the Church received the overmastering passion for service, which sent forth its members upon the matchless adventure of world-conquest.[6]

The parallel between the experiences of the early Quakers and those of the first Christians is very striking. The likeness was inevitable, not artificial. Identity of spirit produced, as it always will, identity of experience. Intimate fellowship with Jesus transformed His first followers into men and women like-minded with Himself. So was it with early Friends. They shared with Him the great conviction that men are born for service, that joy comes by the way of sorrow, that true gain is the fruit of loss, that to die greatly is to find the fullest life. Only in the spirit of adventure can men dare the consequences of such a creed. Each article is a challenge to the world's hostility, and to live out the whole is given only to the few who, greatly daring, will 'follow naked the naked Christ.' The Quaker Church of the seventeenth century, both in success and failure, has much to teach the followers of Christ to-day.

[6] Whatever view is held as to the missionary outlook of the historical Jesus, the essentially 'world-appropriating' character of Christianity is certainly the product of His spirit.

The Quaker attitude towards life was rooted and grounded in an immediate and personal realisation of the presence and power of a living God. True life, whether for an individual or a Church, depends upon the discovery of God by the path of first-hand experience. This discovery is the reward of an adventure; it is made only by those who will go out upon the quest unencumbered by the dead weight of traditional conception.

But the end of one quest is only the beginning of another, The discovery of God is in itself a call to adventure in His service. God's revelation of Himself is progressive; to every individual is given the supreme privilege of adding to the sum of divine truth.

> 'There are as many unveilings of God as there are saintly souls.'[7]

Such was the central conviction of early Friends. From the profound inward experience of the reality of God there followed logically enough the main articles of the Quaker creed.

Fellowship with God in the inner life made of conscience a divine voice, whose utterances were the direct commands of a Father to a loved and loving child. Herein we find a chief source of the amazing release of energy, and heightened power of physical endurance, which characterised the life and activities of many Friends. Calls to new work were obeyed implicitly as divine injunctions, and even the extravagances connected with 'signs' are sanctified by the humble conviction of those by whom the signs were given that the very unpleasantness of the tasks enjoined was proof of a God-directed impulse within the soul.

The intense missionary enthusiasm of the Quaker leaders sprang directly from their unwavering assurance that the truth proclaimed by them was of divine origin. As Publishers of Truth they faced unflinchingly the opposition of a truth-hating world. As fellow-workers with God they saw all life not 'in terms of use,' but in terms of service. As men to whom God's presence was a vivid reality they showed themselves sublimely indifferent to all outward circumstances.

> 'The truth which possessed their souls involved a new venture of life, and they were ready to risk reputation, home, family, goods and life in their holy experiment.'[8]

[7] John the Scot, quoted in R. M. Jones' *Studies in Mystical Religion.*
[8] R. M. Jones, Introduction to *Second Period,* p. xlvi.

Friends' courage in face of persecution was the immediate outcome of a triumphant faith in a living God. As 'a people whose God and worship were dearer to them than life,' they found 'bonds pleasant,'[9] and trials but the means to a fuller manifestation of the Divine Presence. They rejoiced that no bitterness of persecution could keep God from them. In prison 'the Lord gave daily hints of His love,'[10] and contentment 'with whatsoever the Lord suffers to pass'[11] lifted them above the tyranny of outward things. A noble utterance of Margaret Fell's may serve as an example of Quaker courage in the early days. Speaking to the magistrate, she declares: 'I must offer and tender my life and all for my testimony, if it be required of me.'[12] If it be true that 'the first credential of any living movement . . . is the capacity for sacrifice which it is able to create,'[13] then by that test Quakerism has deserved to live.

The stubborn determination of Friends to continue their worship, the dislike of institutional religion, the courageous stand for religious liberty and the refusal to regard the Bible as the sole source of revelation—all alike have their origin in an intense conviction of 'the soul's inalienable right to God.'[14]

If God speaks directly to the human heart, then 'watching,' *i.e.* waiting in the stillness of receptive silence for the divine voice, is 'as needful to the soul as breathing is to the body.'[15] Thus it was impossible for Friends to relinquish their right of access to the living God.

A belief in the human soul as the sphere of divine revelation led Friends to demand both for themselves and, theoretically at least, for others, the right of religious freedom. In an age of unparalleled zest in theological controversy, and bitter intolerance, we shall not expect to find that courteous appreciation of an opponent's position which, with whatever failure in practice, is our ideal to-day. The Quaker loved a fight, and to

[9] Isaac Penington, in a letter written from Aylesbury gaol, *Ibid.*, p. 11.
[10] Francis Howgill, from prison, *Second Period*, p. 37.
[11] William Caton, from Amsterdam to Friends in England in the year of the Plague, *Ibid.*, p. 49.
[12] *Ibid.*, p. 34.
[13] Benjamin Kidd, *The Science of Power*, p. 144.
[14] R. M. Jones, *Studies*, &c., p. 133.
[15] John Bellers, *Second Period*, p. 573.

be made 'a thrashing instrument in the hand of the Lord'[16] was a *rôle* not altogether uncongenial to the keener spirits. Yet the opposition offered by Friends to all persecution for religious belief was unwavering.

While Friends yielded to none in their admiration for and knowledge of Scripture, their fundamental belief in a Self-revealing God as a present reality made them champions of progress, men who 'fronted the dawn in glad surrender to its light.' With this may be coupled the courageous prayer of the Quaker theologian, Robert Barclay:

> 'I pray that the Lord would save me from resisting or refusing to receive light when it does proceed from Himself.'[17]

Finally, the Quaker attitude towards the oath, the refusal to pay fines, and even the departure from current modes of speech and dress, matters which may perhaps appear to us comparatively trivial, were part and parcel of that 'witness for a single standard of life'[18] incumbent upon those for whom religion was beyond all else a personal relationship with a living God. He who finds God everywhere sees a new sacredness in common things.

If in their experience of God early Friends stood in line with the first Christians and with Jesus Himself, the Quaker estimate of man was no less truly a re-discovery of the New Testament outlook. Man, in the thought of Christ, is a being 'equipped for perfection,' destined for fellowship with the Divine. George Fox, by his insistence on the truth of the Inner Light, re-affirmed the Christian doctrine of man's kinship with God. The current thought was vitiated, as mediaeval theology had been vitiated, by the Augustinian dogma of the innate depravity of human nature. In Calvinism man is 'for theological purposes reduced to his lowest terms.'[19] Divine grace works arbitrarily from without, and an attitude of passive receptivity becomes the highest attainment possible in relation to the will of God. Genuine Quaker experience stands poles apart from any doctrine of quietistic colouring. For Fox, the source of the light by which the conscience of every individual is illumined was found in the spirit of the indwelling Christ.

[16] William Edmondson, *Ibid.*, p. 260. The phrase, in its original context, refers not to religious controversy, but to rebukes administered for moral offences. [17] *Ibid.*, p. 330. [18] *Ibid.*, p. 182
[19] R. M. Jones, Introduction to *Second Period*, p. xxxv.

It will be clear, therefore, that just as the re-affirmation of the Christian doctrine of God led Friends to a life of adventurous witness for divine truth revealed within the sphere of personal experience, so the re-discovery of the New Testament estimate of man depended no less for its practical application upon the spirit of adventure in which it found expression. Free men, conscious of their freedom, and pledged to the service of a Father-God, who in the loving intimacy of soul with soul unfolds His purposes from day to day, will find life's meaning in the endeavour to bring home to the world the complementary truths of Divine Sonship and human brotherhood.

The living out of their great testimony to the equal value for God of every human soul involved Friends in a life of strenuous activity, while their dynamic faith in the human heart as a potential dwelling place for the Spirit of Christ afforded the strongest incentive to tireless missionary enterprise.

In adopting Christ's attitude towards God and man, Friends necessarily accepted also His interpretation of life in terms of service. The Quaker will to service was limited by no boundaries, nor could any human opposition check the ardour of its enthusiasm. Friends saw all life as a God-given opportunity for high adventure; they viewed the world as their natural sphere of service. Hence from the first their outlook was universal, not sectional. Quakers never thought of themselves as a sect. 'They were champions of a universal truth; they were the bearers of a faith for the whole human race; they were contending for a new way of life for the entire world.'[20] Here lay the secret of the almost superhuman energy displayed through long years by the first Publishers of Truth. Fox, who would have endorsed whole-heartedly the dictum of Benjamin Whichcote, that 'to be (spiritually) well and unactive do not consist together,'[21] took the world as his parish. The epistle addressed by him 'to all nations under the whole heaven'[22] was no freak of a disordered mind, but a sober indication of the scope of Quaker service as he conceived it.

The Quaker leaders held by the truth that 'no virtue is to be trusted until it has been put into practice.'[23] This robust

[20] R. M. Jones, Introduction to *Second Period*, p. xlvi.
[21] R. M. Jones, *Spiritual Reformers*, p. 300.
[22] *Second Period*, p. 216.
[23] Tauler, quoted by R. M. Jones, *Studies*, &c., p. 280.

consciousness of the worth of action saved them from the *via negativa* of the unbalanced mystic, and made of Quakerism a dynamic moral and social force, seeking to permeate all life with 'the spirit that is called Christ.'[24]

The courage of the youthful Penn, which led him to address *No Cross, No Crown*, to a group of intimate friends, is typical of many similar acts of social bravery. The letter sent by Fox to Parliament[25] in 1660 indicates clearly his sturdy determination to reform the national life by a bold appeal to the national assembly. We find him placarding church doors[26] with outspoken protests against swearing and drunkenness, seeking to modify the harsh severity of the criminal laws, and endeavouring to alleviate poverty by the introduction of a fair scale of wages for all.

Penn was tireless in his opposition to parliamentary bribery, and scathing in his denunciations of misused wealth and social oppression. His own 'Holy Experiment' was itself a largely successful attempt to build up a State on genuinely Christian foundations, an attempt wherein the social reformer of to-day may find an incentive to the application of the principles of Christianity to corporate relationships. The problems of reconstruction are not peculiar to the twentieth century, and the story of Quaker colonisation deserves the careful attention of all those who seek to make the world a fit dwelling place for humanity.

In the work of John Bellers, 'the pioneer of modern Christian Socialism,'[27] and the framer of a detailed scheme for the establishment of a League of Nations, the social energies of early Quakerism attain their fullest expression. Bellers, as a firm believer in the regenerating influence of the Spirit of Christ, and a staunch champion of the oppressed poor, did much to make explicit in the Quakerism of his day the tremendous social implications of the Christian faith.

These sturdy efforts to reform abuses and to achieve for Christianity 'a social realisation adequate to its essence,'[28] were

[24] The phrase is used by Professor Gilbert Murray in his pamphlet, *The League of Nations and the Democratic Idea*, p. 30.

[25] *Second Period*, p. 16. [26] *Ibid.*, p. 555. [27] *Ibid.*, p. 571.

[28] The words are those of a Swiss pastor, quoted by Richard Heath, *The Captive City of God*, p. 16.

as much adventure for Christ as the work of a pioneer missionary in a heathen land. 'In every form of authority that appeared,' as James Nayler beautifully expresses it, 'Friends had waited for the face of Jesus.'[29] They, at least, did not a little in a cruel age to make the expectation a reality.

The work of organisation achieved by Fox was in itself no proof of a departure from the first principles of Quakerism, nor was it responsible for the rapid decline of the spirit of adventure which is manifest at the close of our period. Fox was wise enough to recognise that 'disembodied spiritual movements cannot succeed,'[30] and that 'the knitting together of Friends into a great religious society was the necessary foundation for larger enterprise.'[31] Opposition between the new group authority and the extreme champions of individual freedom was inevitable. But Fox was certainly no formalist, and his conception of Church authority was both democratic and spiritual. He stood throughout by the principle that 'the least member in the Church hath an office, and is serviceable, and every member hath need one of another.'[32] Nor did he waver for a moment in his adherence to the vital truth that the authority of ministers is dependent upon the manifestation of spiritual gifts. Such gifts, shared as they undoubtedly were by women, compelled Quakerism, to its eternal honour, to recognise the essential equality of women with men, and to grant them their full right of participation in the life and work of the Society.

The Church was conceived by Friends as 'a family of prophets spiritually armed for the conquest of the world.'[33] Its unity was the spiritual unity of an inward life. Its members were the company of Christ's followers, 'walking sweetly and harmoniously together in the midst of different practices.'[34] Its power was Christ-given, its policy Christ-directed, its mission Christ-enjoined.

Failure, when it came, was due not to organisation in itself, but to the rise of party-spirit, the benumbing influence of security, the evil effects of prosperity, albeit honourably

[29] *Beginnings*, p. 481.
[30] R. M. Jones, Introduction to *Second Period*, p. xxviii.
[31] *Ibid*, p. 401. [32] *Ibid.*, p. 259. [33] *Ibid.*, p. 351.
[34] Isaac Penington, *Ibid.*, p. 640.

attained, the passing of the leaders, the gradual substitution of tradition for sanctified initiative, of static orthodoxy for dynamic faith, of passive contentment with the *status quo* for the spirit of adventure, born of the glowing vision of a world to be transformed by the power of a living Christ.

Faith was no longer the consecration of the will to the highest endeavour; it degenerated into the meticulous observance of a rigid tradition.

> 'Friends were betrayed into the fallacy of thinking that walking in the footsteps of men who walked with God was the same thing as walking with God.'[35]

Two conclusions emerge with startling clearness from a study of the early history of Quakerism. First, the causes which produced the decline of Quakerism in the 'Second Period' are identical with the causes which lie at the root of the Church's failure to-day; and secondly, the spirit of sanctified adventure which animated the Society of Friends in early days, can alone inspire the Church of this or any age for the great tasks which it exists to achieve.

The Church to-day is 'not making enough of Jesus Christ.'[36] Its ineffectiveness is due, beyond all else, to the loss of His spirit. Individuals there may be who are truly Spirit-led; but no one would dare to affirm that the organised communities of His followers are clearly and undeniably guided in their outlook and activities by the Spirit of Christ. The contempt or indifference with which the ordinary man regards the Churches, when compared with the large measure of respect and even admiration accorded by him to the Person of Jesus Christ, is a sufficient indication that something is wrong. However arbitrary and ill-informed his judgment, the ordinary man is unfortunately right in his conviction that between the Spirit of Christ and the spirit of the Church, which professes to represent Him, there is too often a degree of difference amounting to positive contradiction.

Now it is obvious that a Church which attempts to do the work of Christ apart from the power and inspiration of His Spirit, deserves failure, and will inevitably achieve it. Without Christ's leadership the use of His name is of no avail. If the Church lacks a policy of adventurous daring, if inspired

[35] *Ibid.*, p. 537.

[36] T. R. Glover, *op.cit.*, p. 4. The whole passage deserves close attention.

direction and a ready willingness to bear the cross are wanting among Christ's followers to-day, it is because 'things not characteristically Christian'[37] have been the Church's main concern.

In the past the Church has 'specialized in irrelevancies,' while too frequently ignoring the things that count. With one party 'Catholic Tradition' has become an obsession, and the temporary expedients of one age have been erected into divisive barriers for all time. The gold of spiritual fellowship in Christ has been bartered for the dross of uniformity of organisation. The spontaneous movement of the Spirit has been checked and limited by an un-Christlike insistence upon the importance of outward unanimity. The timorous orthodoxy of another party has made a fetish of the Bible, and sought to obstruct the progress of scholarship in one sphere after another of Biblical research. In all parties alike a conventional morality has laid stress upon the 'Don'ts' until the Church is now thought to consist chiefly of 'people who disapprove of things.'[38] Everywhere organized Christianity has played for safety, and exalted the negative virtues. Religion and selfishness have become synonymous for many minds. The Decalogue, not the Sermon on the Mount, has been the Church's real charter. Caution, 'for which there is no beatitude,' which does not count among the fruits of the Spirit,'[39] has come to occupy the place of honour as the queen of ecclesiastical virtues.

In literal truth everything depends upon the recovery by the Church of Christ's outlook, and the spirit of adventure by which His life was dominated. The world-shaking consequences of such a recovery are made plain to us in the story of seventeenth century Quakerism.

Where fellowship with God is a reality, there can be 'no resting in past openings of truth.'[40] The measure of the Church's unwillingness to welcome the pioneer and the reformer is the measure of its disbelief in a living God. A Church of Christian adventurers, pledged to 'make the experiment of *applied Christianity* on a scale as large as the world,'[41] is the one power great enough to achieve the world's salvation.

W. Maurice Pryke.

[37] N. S. Talbot, *Thoughts on Religion at the Front*, p. 32.
[38] Herbert Gray, *As Tommy sees Us*, p. 24.
[39] William Littleboy, *The Day of Our Visitation*, p. 27.
[40] Isaac Penington, *Ibid.*, p. 382. [41] E. S. Wood, *op. cit.*, p. 435.

THE POSITION OF THE MODERN CHURCHMAN.

LABELS are generally misleading. They mean different things for different people. If I label myself a Modern Churchman, it is not that I altogether like the name, nor that I wish to label others as behind the times. Modern Churchmen consent to wear this label as an indication of their belief that all new truth, from whatever quarter it may come, is part of a continuous revelation of God to man.

God, from His very nature, is always trying to reveal Himself more fully: man is so constituted that to follow the path of discovery is essential to a true life. When we speak of Revelation, we are thinking of a movement of God manward; when we speak of Discovery we are thinking of the search of man after God. Here, as everywhere, the law of co-operation holds good. The best results are obtainable only as God and man work together. Thus fear of new knowledge should be impossible. To speak *e.g.* of a conflict between Religion and Science is really meaningless. When Darwin published the *Origin of Species* there was an outcry on the part of the Churches, of which most of us are now heartily ashamed. Darwin's hypothesis of evolution was but a new and splendid revelation, or, if you will, discovery of the methods by which God works.

Some people, of course, are still asking: Can you reconcile Darwin with *Genesis*, and if not, what value is left to the Old Testament? Now it may be said at once that as a textbook of science the Old Testament is absolutely worthless, because since its books were written both Revelation and Discovery have progressed, and Professor Soddy, let us say, is a more reliable guide on scientific questions that the writer of *Genesis*, or even than Galileo. Shall we then scrap the Old Testament altogether? That would be as foolish as to insist that Biblical science must be accepted by all Christians in the teeth of modern discoveries. The value of the Old Testament is religious, not scientific. In the Old Testament (and remember we are concerned with a library, the contents of which cover

a period of more than a thousand years) we have the record of this double process of Revelation and Discovery. We see a growing knowledge of the character and will of God. The pictures of God in the Old Testament are not all equally true. If a man tries to get at the true picture of God by putting together all that the Bible says of Him, the result will be confusion. Some of the actions stamped in the Old Testament with the divine approval are on a level with the worst crimes of the German army in Belgium. In the great Prophets, on the other hand, we find teaching which reaches sometimes to the Christian level.

In Jesus Christ we have the true picture of God's character. That is the conviction of the New Testament writers and of Modern Churchmen. Now Christ definitely sets aside some Old Testament teaching as immoral. He repudiates, for example, the law of revenge (an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth), and it will be a great day for the Churches when this is universally recognized. It follows, then, that the whole of the Old Testament is not binding upon us to-day. As Christians we are concerned only with Christ's teaching and spirit. Nothing which falls below the level of that teaching, or is out of harmony with that spirit, is to be accepted. In Christ, His teaching, His acts, His life, His spirit—in Christ Himself, we see revealed the character of God. Christ is the answer to the insistent question: What is God like? He is 'the Portrait of the invisible God.' By the picture of God which Christ presents, the truth or falsehood of all other pictures must be judged.

Many have come to recognise the value of scholars' work on the Old Testament; they admit the result to have been not loss, but gain; they see that to treat the books of the Old Testament 'like any other book,' to apply to them the ordinary methods of criticism and research, is the sure way to discover whatever is extraordinary or unique in their teaching. We understand now that the Old Testament is inspired because it was written by inspired men, and for no other reason. But we are quite clear that an inspired writer 3,000 years ago was no more magically protected from mistakes than an inspired writer of to-day. In the case of the Old Testament this is

now pretty generally admitted. Of the New Testament it is no less true. A hard and fast line cannot be drawn. Inasmuch as the writers of the New Testament stand nearer to the events which they describe, the evidence for those events may be thought to be so far better; yet complete certainty is no more divinely guaranteed for the New Testament than for the Old. We are concerned here not with what might have been, not with what we should have expected or preferred, but with what actually is.

Take, for instance, the question of New Testament miracles. Absolute proof that some alleged miraculous event either did or did not happen as described is never obtainable. In order to reach even to some degree of probability, the question must be approached from many sides. The New Testament writers expected miracles; the older defenders of Christianity saw in miracles the strongest proof that the Christian religion was true. To-day the position is different. For many of us miracles are a difficulty, not a help. We see God not in the inexplicable, the extraordinary, the spectacular, but in the whole ordered course of nature and history. To find God only 'in the gaps' is to see Him less and less as the gaps in our knowledge are filled up, and to run the risk at last of driving God altogether from the world. The Modern Churchman believes that what are termed the miraculous cures of Christ happened substantially as recorded; but for him they are not miracles, if by miracle you mean a breach of natural law, but rather proofs of what a man may do who understands what Nature's God would teach. With a story like the Feeding of the Five Thousand, the Modern Churchman has more difficulty. He does not deny its possibility, but he is inclined to seek an explanation in some natural event. A study of the growth of miracle stories in other religions and in the Middle Ages shows him how easily a natural event can be transformed into a supposed miracle.

What are we to say about the stories of the Virgin Birth and the Empty Tomb? The Modern Churchman asserts that the truth even of these events must be tested by the evidence available. Not even here can we speak of absolute certainty. But if the Modern Churchman questions the narratives of the

Virgin Birth, he does *not* question the truth of the Incarnation; if he refuses to commit himself to a belief in the Empty Tomb, he does *not* doubt the reality of the Resurrection, nor the fact of a living and present Christ. He claims the right to distinguish between facts and the explanations offered to account for them. Christ, 'the Portrait of the invisible God'—that is the fact. By that fact the Modern Churchman stands. But the fact does not depend on the story of the Virgin Birth, and that story he holds himself free to reject if the evidence seems to require him to do so. Again, Christ lives and He convinced the disciples of His continued presence—that is the fact; by that, too, the Modern Churchman stands. But he is not, therefore, bound to accept the story of the Empty Tomb. That story is perhaps nothing more than an inference from the fact of a living Christ—an inference natural indeed to the first century, but out of harmony with the thought of to-day. In each case the fact and the explanation are on different planes. I can never prove that the tomb was empty or that Christ was born without a human father. Here I can neither affirm nor deny with anything more than probability behind my statement. No *experience* of mine can make the truth of these stories a whit more certain. On the other hand, when I assert that Christ lives and that in Him I see God, I cannot force you to agree with me; but I can offer you the test of experience, I can say, 'Look for yourself; see whether the faith of a Christian does not work as a hypothesis, does not fit the facts, does not verify itself increasingly with the growing years.' A faith so tested has nothing to fear from new discoveries; it is a faith for simple and learned alike, since it rests not on the exploded authority of an infallible Bible, not on the hardly won conclusions of critic and scholar, but on the sure basis of experience, an experience which may be achieved by any honest and adventurous seeker after truth.

If the Bible is not infallible, neither is the Church. To the Modern Churchman the question: Did Christ *found* the Church? is really without meaning. Clearly He left followers to carry on His work in the power of His spirit. What He Himself taught about the time and nature of His return it is difficult to determine. There can be little doubt that the dis-

ciples expected His 'Second Coming' at any moment. Thus the question of Church organization can scarcely have been of overwhelming interest. Still less, if we may trust the Gospel portrait, can it have interested Christ. That the Church from early days has been governed by bishops, and that government by bishops has proved effective, is true. But to say that is not to say that a Church not so governed is no Church, nor may we assert that government by bishops or any other form of government whatever was commanded by Christ. The Church consists of all those 'who profess and call themselves Christians'; its existence is necessary for carrying on the work of Christ; it is, in St. Paul's phrase, His Body, inasmuch as His spirit dwells in those who follow Him and works through them. The unity which Christ required is a unity of spirit. He said nothing of organization. Where two or three are gathered in His name, there is Christ.

Of Creeds I shall say little. Creeds are based on the New Testament. They have no independent authority unless we are to suppose that the Church which vouches for them is infallible, and this both commonsense and the record of Church history forbid us to do. The statements of the Creeds are no more above criticism than the statements of the Bible. While the Creeds are valuable summaries of certain aspects of the Christian faith, it is absurd to require a wholesale acceptance of their statements as a condition of membership, for the simple reason that with the best will in the world we cannot bind ourselves to repeat all the clauses in exactly the sense which commends itself to our neighbours. In this connection we do well to remember the saying of the late Bishop of Carlisle, 'The more complex the Creed, the more it obscures the Christ.'

There can be no doubt that Baptism and Holy Communion go back to the earliest days of the Christian Church, and the Modern Churchman desires that these sacraments shall be profitably used and honourably esteemed. At the same time he is careful not to ascribe to them a magical significance. He would have it made quite plain that unbaptized infants are no more beyond the circle of the love of God than those who have been baptized. For him the distinction between valid and invalid sacraments is unreal. The presence of Christ in the

Holy Communion in no way depends for him upon the ministrations of a priest episcopally ordained. He may be even uncertain whether Christ intended to institute a service which should be repeated. On the other hand, he sees in the Holy Communion a service 'instinct with the personality of Christ'; it is full of Christ's spirit; the ideas to which it gives expression are His. The Holy Communion stands for the truth that the world cannot afford to forget Christ, that Christ is no mere memory, but a present Friend; that in Him all are brothers, that God is seen in the common things and is accessible to all alike, that service and sacrifice are 'the very bread and wine of existence,' that to be a Christian is to receive into yourself the Spirit of Christ crucified, and to let that spirit express itself in word and action. Therefore it is that the Church does well to keep that service as the centre of its worship in every age.

For the Modern Churchman, as for all Christians, Christ is central. No one has ever succeeded in making too much of Jesus Christ. But just because we are so certain of this, we are eager, as Richard Baxter was eager, 'not to make more fundamentals than Christ made.' As Modern Churchmen we seek passionately the real Christ. In that search for reality we welcome the results of what is called the Higher Criticism, which enable us to know the Jesus of Galilee with a surer knowledge than was possible in former days. We find in Him one who saw God as Father, men as sons of God, life as an opportunity for service in the spirit of love. For us as for Christ the essentials of Christianity are found in love of God, love of man, and an attitude of discipleship towards Christ as Master. Our aim, therefore, is simplification. 'Christianity,' someone has said, 'is something a great deal simpler than the Churches would like to make it.' This we believe. But by simplification we do not mean a Christianity made easy, whittled down, robbed of its essential character; we mean rather a Christianity so simple in presentation that a child can grasp it, yet so true to Christ's own intention that only those led by His spirit can see the full range of the ideal which it presents to men. With the aim of simplification, I should wish to link the search for truth as a dominant desire amongst us. Reference has been

recently made to 'the Church's exasperating habit of telling little lies in support of a great truth.' As Modern Churchmen we seek to free the Church from such a charge. Believing neither in an infallible Church nor in an infallible Bible, we claim Christ's promise of guidance into further truth; we regard the Church as a company of men and women pledged to proclaim Christianity 'as a way of living ordinary life'; we stand to it that Christ has a message for every man in every age, and that in Him lies the solution of the world's problems, the answer to man's every need.

With the great scientists we hold that the most important discoveries are made 'not from any desire of gain, but from a simple determination to know the truth.' We believe that by following this road 'Christians will become as great masters of the spiritual world, as scientists have become of the natural world.' With William Penn we assert that 'God did never ask man leave to introduce or make further discoveries of His mind to the world'; with Robert Browning we say triumphantly, in the conviction of a personal experience which no doubt can shake, 'The acknowledgment of God in Christ accepted by thy reason, solves for thee all questions in the earth and out of it.'

MR. H. G. WELLS AND THE HISTORY OF RELIGION.

THIS is the age of specialists. Christopher North, in his '*Noctes Ambrosianae*,' tells of a man whom he met collecting beetles. 'I understand, sir,' he said, 'that you are an entomologist.' 'I never dreamed,' replied the collector, 'of calling myself an "entomologist"; I have been honoured with the title of a coleopterist, but I prefer to call myself a "scarabeist."' Historians now-a-days concentrate on a short period or a limited subject. Mr. H. G. Wells, however, in his *Outline of the History of the World* has, like Bacon, taken all knowledge as his province. The result has justified his boldness; the sale of the *Outline* has in all probability exceeded that of any historical work published in recent times, while the

verdict of the literary world has been on the whole favourable. The book deserves its success. Mr. Wells shows great power of marshalling facts, he never loses himself in details, he has the true historical imagination that can make the past live before our eyes; perhaps no writer has been more successful in visualizing the story of our race as a coherent whole.

Needless to say, the book has many faults; a faultless universal history is no more to be expected than a faultless epic. The collaboration of several eminent scholars has not saved Mr. Wells from occasional blunders. He is also sometimes needlessly and unpleasantly dogmatic. The faculty of reverence is not strongly developed in him. He makes small account of the glory that was Greece and the grandeur that was Rome. Carlyle's definition of history as 'the biography of great men' would not appeal to him. Alexander, Cæsar, Charlemagne, Napoleon are weighed in the balance and found wanting. His heroes are few and somewhat oddly chosen; it is astonishing, for example, to find him trying to make a martyred sage out of a blood-thirsty maniac like Marat.

In spite of his scientific attainments, Mr. Wells is hardly a scientific historian. He writes history with a purpose. He feels intensely that, unless we concentrate in the near future upon the making of a new world-state of righteousness out of our present confusions, our civilization is doomed. Humanity needs, he feels, a common will, a common religion. All great religions have their cosmogonies, their account of the beginning of the world and man. Foremost among the broad fundamentals of the coming world-state, Mr. Wells postulates an universal religion. He says:

> 'This will not be Christianity, nor Islam, nor Buddhism, nor any such specialized form of religion, but religion itself pure and undefiled; the Eight-fold Way, the Kingdom of Heaven, brotherhood, creative service and self-forgetfulness.'

The Bible of the Hebrews was the record of God's dealing with Israel; the Bible of a world-religion must be the history of the world and mankind. The earliest chapters deal with human origins. How life began we do not know; something of its development from its lowly beginnings in the shallow seas of a far off geological epoch we can trace in the record, fragmentary and confused as it is, of the rocks. We are glad

to learn that man is not closely related to the anthropoid apes. There is still a lingering prejudice against what is popularly called Darwinism on the ground that it is supposed to teach that men are descended from monkeys. Dean Burgon, the gallant defender of a lost cause, once exclaimed in the course of a sermon before the University of Oxford:

> 'O ye men of science, leave me my ancestors in Paradise, and I will leave you yours in the Zoological Gardens!'

But if primitive man was no missing link with the apes, he showed little promise of the august destiny which awaited him. His earliest remains in drift and cave deposit reveal him as a squalid savage, probably speechless, distinguished from the other brutes by a certain inventiveness and a social instinct which led him to herd together in family groups. Ages pass, and the rigours of glacial epochs wax and wane. We are shown Later Palaeolithic man, a superior kind of savage, with a feeling for art exhibited in carvings on bone and paintings in caves. The Neolithic Age succeeds, and the beginning of the cultivation of the soil. Here, according to our author, we meet for the first time with indubitable evidence of the existence of religion. Whence came this new factor in human consciousness? Mr. Wells has no cut-and-dried theory on the subject. He cannot with Max Müller resolve all primitive beliefs into solar myths; he is sceptical about Sir James Frazer's theories regarding the origin of Sacrifice. Religion, he holds, had many origins. Ancestor-worship was, no doubt, a potent factor, but it will not explain everything.

The settlements and cities of early civilization centred round the Temples; Priests were the first leaders of men, the first Kings. During long ages the Temple was the brain of the growing community, the centre of light, the nurse of science and the arts. But the priesthood, indispensable at first, became later a stumbling block to human progress. It clung too much to tradition, it was conservative, inadaptable. A new figure appears on the world's stage—the Prophet.

> 'The later prophets of Israel began to talk of the One God and of the promise that some day the world should come to peace and unity and happiness. From this time onward there runs through human thought, now weakly and obscurely, now gathering power, the idea of one rule in the world, and of a promise and possibility of an active and splendid peace and happiness in human affairs . . . Later

on, as we shall tell, there was born a prophet of unprecedented power, Jesus, whose followers founded the great universal religion of Christianity.'

Meanwhile at Athens there was the beginning of secular thought, philosophy and science; and in far-off India Gautama, whom men called 'The Buddha,' was preaching the Eightfold Way to Salvation. Mr. Wells has a great admiration for Buddhism in its original and uncorrupted form. Its teaching, he holds, is in the closest harmony with modern ideas, and is beyond all dispute the achievement of one of the most penetrating intelligences the world has ever known. He is in entire sympathy with its denial of personal immortality. Yet he sees the superiority of Judaism, with all its limitations over Greek philosophy and Buddhist thought.

'The intolerance of the Jewish mind did keep its essential faith clear and clean. There was no self-cleansing element in Buddhism, no effective prohibition of superstitious practices, spirit raising, incantations, and supplementary worships. Socrates was quite willing to bow politely or sacrifice formally to almost any divinity—reserving his private thoughts. Gautama had no inkling of the idea of a jealous God, a God who would have none other gods, a God of terrible Truth, who would not tolerate any lurking belief in magic, witchcraft, or old customs, or any sacrificing to the god-king, or any trifling with the stern unity of things.'

The Christian reader of the *Outline* naturally turns with peculiar interest to the part which describes the rise of Christianity. The writer seems to feel the difficulty of treating this part of his subject with impartiality.

'The audience to which this book will first be presented will be largely an audience of Christians, with perhaps a sprinkling of Jewish readers, and the former at least will regard Jesus of Nazareth as being much more than a human teacher, and his appearance in the world not as a natural event in history, but as something of a supernatural sort, interrupting that steady development towards a common consciousness and a common will which we have hitherto been tracing in this book.'

This does not represent quite fairly the faith of the modern Christian; the 'natural' and 'supernatural' blend into one in the operations of Him, by Whom are all things, and for Whom are all things. The traditionalist will probably feel that Mr. Wells' professions of impartiality are somewhat illusory. He makes it quite clear that he does not accept the Virgin Birth, the physical Resurrection, and the bodily Ascension of Christ. He ignores the apocalyptic and eschatological element in His

teaching. Yet he feels that it is by the spirit of Jesus that Christianity lives and has its power in the world.

> 'We are left, if we strip the record of its difficult accessories, with the figure of a being, very human, very earnest and passionate, capable of swift anger and teaching a new and simple and profound doctrine, namely, the universal loving Fatherhood of God and the coming of the Kingdom of Heaven. He was clearly a person, to use a common phrase, of intense personal magnetism. He attracted followers and filled them with love and courage. Weak and ailing people were heartened and healed by his presence. . . . He was like some terrible moral huntsman digging mankind out of the snug burrows in which they had lived hitherto. In the white blaze of this kingdom of his there was to be no property, no privilege, no pride and precedence; no motive indeed and no reward but love.'

Of St. Paul Mr Wells says:

> 'He was a man of much wider education and a much narrower intellectuality than Jesus seems to have been. . . . It is clear that he apprehended much of the spirit of Jesus and his doctrine of a new birth, but he built this into a theological system, a very subtle and ingenious system, whose appeal to this day is chiefly intellectual.'

Transferred to Alexandria, the confluence of old and decaying cultures, Christianity suffered a change and became converted into a sacerdotal religion. To a good Protestant like Mr. Wells this change appears a disaster; he distrusts the Priest as much as he loves the Prophet. After the fiery trial of the persecutions, Christianity came to terms with Roman state-craft in the person of Constantine, to whom, by the way, Mr. Wells does more justice than did Gibbon. Next we have the attempt of the Mediaeval Church, splendid in its conception, however marred in its execution, to realize the ideal of the City of God on earth. Once again, however, Sacerdotalism betrayed mankind. The Church could not bring itself to believe that Europe was outgrowing its tutelage: it tried to forge bonds for the growing intelligence of mankind. It became petty and crafty and persecuting. The Protestant Reformation came and rent Christendom asunder. In its origin a revival of the prophetic side of Christianity Protestantism entangled itself with kings and aristocrats, who pretended zeal for pure religion, but whose real aim was power and plunder. Deprived of its unity, Europe fell under the spell of Nationalism: Christendom fell apart into jarring nations, each with its Machiavellian foreign office. The French Revolution, the revolt of the common man, was wrecked by Napoleon. The great scientific discoveries of the nineteenth

century gave a vast extension to man's power over nature, and opened a prospect to the human race of relief from want and drudgery. But the enlightenment left Europe intellectually confused and spiritually decadent. Darwinism seemed to contradict the Christian doctrine of the Fall.

> 'The minds of many quite honest men resisted the new knowledge instinctively and irrationally. Their whole moral edifice was built upon false history, they were too old and set to rebuild it; they felt the practical truth of their moral convictions, and this new truth seemed to them to be incompatible with that; they believed that to assent to it would be to prepare a moral collapse of the world. And so they produced a moral collapse by not assenting to it. Formal Christianity was confronted with a clearly demonstrable error in her theological statements. The Christian theologians were neither wise enough nor mentally nimble enough to accept the new truth, modify their formulae, and insist upon the living undiminished vitality of the religious reality those formulae had hitherto sufficed to express. The whole of Christendom became as a whole sceptical. . . A real demoralization ensued. The true gold of religion was in many cases thrown away with the worn-out purse that had contained it for so long, and it was not recovered. Towards the close of the nineteenth century a crude misunderstanding of Darwinism had become the fundamental mind-stuff of great masses of the educated everywhere.'

Biological phrases, 'The struggle for existence,' 'The survival of the fittest,' provided a 'scientific' justification for military aggression and the commercial exploitation of weaker races. Materialism, Imperialism and Capitalism led to the catastrophe of the Great War.

The Outline of History, like the Bible and Plato's *Republic*, ends with an apocalypse, a promise of a millenium. How far we are from that goal, whether the reign of peace and unity will be reached in a few generations or across contentious centuries the author does not presume to decide. We must regretfully admit that the close of this great history is a little disappointing. We have our doubts about the scientific New Jerusalem. It is not simply that we are uncertain about the nearness of the world-order and the universal reign of justice. We have a profound misgiving that the earth in which the Psalmist felt himself a stranger and a pilgrim will never yield to man an unalloyed satisfaction. 'Man,' writes Carlyle, 'is not what you call a happy animal.' Can the individual so lose himself in the Whole as to cease to desire a personal existence after death? Is there no need for another world to complete and justify this?

G. MILNER.

THE ORIGIN OF THE CHURCHMEN'S UNION

IN the summer of 1898 I happened, as I well remember, to see on one of Smith's bookstalls in Norwich a new weekly paper called the *Church Gazette*. I was astonished and delighted to find that it was an out-and-out advocate of Liberal theology, freedom of criticism and research, a comprehensive national Church, and the claims of the laity to a responsible position in the Church of England. On enquiry I learned the origin of this phenomenon in journalism. It lay in the strong conviction of a clergyman of the Church of England, the Rev. William Routh, that in order to break the conspiracy of silence which for long had marked the stricter sect of the orthodox towards the inheritors of the Broad Church movement, all that was required was an organ in the Press for the expression of Liberal theological opinion. This brilliant, courageous, and self-sacrificing effort on the part of an individual Churchman, who spent a large sum of money upon the venture, richly deserves to be recorded.

The *Church Gazette* ran for a couple of years, and ceased. But although a financial failure in journalism, it proved to be the seed-bed of the Churchmen's Union. In its early numbers the Rev. H. G. Rosedale, vicar of St. Peter's, Ladbroke Gardens, opened a correspondence which produced the first conference of Liberal Churchmen. On July 27th, 1898, a number of the pioneers of the present movement met in London. They discussed the Church's need of progressive thought and the means of meeting that need by association. The following resolutions were passed:

1. That this meeting desires to express its sense of the necessity of taking steps in order to unite the body of Churchmen who consider that dogma is susceptible of re-interpretation and re-statement in accordance with the clearer perception of truth attained by discovery and research.

2. That in order to prevent the falling away of the thoughtful and educated from the Church this meeting pledges itself to support an organization which shall unite together all such Churchmen.

3. That a provisional committee be appointed to meet and consider the best steps to be taken to give effect to the above resolutions.

4. That the *Church Gazette* be the official organ.

Letters of encouragement, and of regret for their inability to be present, were read from Dean Bradley, Dean Farrar, Dean Lefroy, Dean Fremantle, Dr. Welldon, Archdeacons Madden, Sinclair, Waugh and others.

The Provisional Committee met at Temple House, E.C., on August 5th, 1898, and the Rev. W. Routh occupied the chair. The result of this and subsequent meetings of the same committee was to lay the foundations of our Society, and to give it a name in the annals of ecclesiastical history. It was called 'The Churchmen's Union for the advancement of Liberal religious thought.'

A meeting of the projectors and supporters of the movement which was held at Bradford on September 29th, 1898, the eve of the Church Congress in that city, gave an impetus to the early growth of the Union. The Dean of Ripon took the chair, and some forty persons, chiefly clergy, were present. One and all emphasized the need of such a Union for bringing clergy and laity nearer together and for interpreting Christian doctrine more in harmony with modern knowledge. It was urged that the only thing which could heal the disastrous differences which rent the Church was the unification of the thought of the Church; and this could be done only by really liberal thinking in religious matters. The Churchmen's Union would form a common platform for men of diverse views, and would emancipate the Church from the reproach of being dominated by narrow-minded factions.

At the conclusion of the labours of the Provisional Committee, the Churchmen's Union was formally inaugurated at a meeting at the Church House, Westminster, on October 31st, 1898. There was a good attendance, and the meeting endorsed a scheme of organization with the following aims and objects:

1. To unite Churchmen who consider that dogma is capable of re-interpretation and re-statement, in accordance with the clearer perception of truth attained by discovery and research.

2. To take such steps for the advancement of legislation in matters of doctrine, discipline and dogma as may seem to conduce to the safety, welfare and progress of the Church.

The immediate action of the Union will be directed towards:

(*a*) Enforcing the right of laymen to an adequate share in Church government.

(*b*) Making the use of the Athanasian Creed optional.

(*c*) Patronage reform.

(*d*) Mutual defence.

3. To promote a conciliatory attitude towards Nonconformists with a view to making the Church inclusive and truly national.

The Executive Committee's efforts at propaganda began at once by the publication of a series of leaflets, the organization of meetings, and the formation of branches.

The declared policy of the Churchmen's Union justified its name. It was not meant to be a party, but an attempt to combine the great body of sensible moderates—probably the large majority of the entire mass of Churchmen—against the extremists in all directions. To this end it was recognized that the laity must have a strong voice in the management of parochial affairs, and that lay representation was indispensable to real comprehensiveness in the Church.

Pursuing the early history of the Churchmen's Union, we reach the first annual meeting on October 6th, 1899, the eve of the Church Congress, at St. Peter's parish room, Bayswater. The Holy Communion was celebrated in St. Peter's Church before the meeting, and this custom has been followed ever since. The Rev. Hastings Rashdall, Fellow of New College, Oxford, preached the sermon. It is worth while recalling the notes which this sermon struck:

Differences of opinion are not inconsistent with essential unity.

Differences of thought or expression should not be made grounds of practical separation.

The foundation of Paul and Apollos was the same; the superstructure was different. There were intellectual differences between them, differences of spiritual tone, of intellectual presentation, of comparative emphasis. That was all. The three great essentials of Christianity are:

(1) Belief in a personal God.

(2) Belief in personal immortality.

(3) Belief in a unique and paramount revelation of God in the historic Christ.

On this basis—the moral and religious consciousness of Jesus—a vast superstructure of doctrinal and ritual and ethical tradition had been built; some useful, some useless, not all intrinsically important.

The never-finished process of building the fabric of knowledge in which every truth has its place must be recognized as part of the continuous self-revelation of God to the world.

There has always been a period of transition in the growth of Christianity, *e.g.* in the days of Constantine, of Scholasticism, of the Reformation. The moment theology ceases to move it loses its hold on the life of the age; witness the example of France.

The first annual report, dated October 6th, 1899, is an interesting document. When Sir William Harcourt and the Ritualists were engaged in violent controversy, the life of the Church could not escape something of the fever of fanaticism; and the report recounted faithfully the difficulties which confronted the Committee. Differences within the Union, and false rumours assiduously circulated by zealous partisans of the two extreme schools of religious thought, required to be met and answered; and the happiest achievement of the Union was to overcome in some measure the difficulty of persuading men of different opinions to see things from a common standpoint. The report finally declared the objects of the Union to be the following:

(1) To defend and maintain the teaching of the Church of England as the historic Church of the Country and as being Apostolic and Reformed.

(2) To uphold the Historic Comprehensiveness and Corporate Life of the Church of England and her Christian Tolerance in all things non-essential.

(3) To give all support in their power to those who are honestly and loyally endeavouring to vindicate the truths of Christianity by the light of scholarship and research, while paying due regard to continuity of work for such changes in the formularies and practices of the Church of England as from time to time are made necessary by the needs and knowledge of the day.

(4) To work for the restoration to the Laity of an effective voice in all Church matters.

(5) To encourage friendly relations between the Church of England and all other Christian bodies.

Few know the difficulty of organization until they begin to attempt it. The projectors of the Churchmen's Union suffered from this defective knowledge. The original Executive Committee had apparently but little experience of the practical steps to be taken either to bring the Union before the public or to further its aims and objects. Still less did it understand the means of securing financial support. Without this the noblest programme and the most zealous advocates will almost inevitably fail. It was courageous of the founders of the Churchmen's Union to take the risk. Their perseverance speaks volumes for the ideals and the spirit of their movement.

Finance was the bugbear from the outset. The cost of printing, stationery, postage, and all the paraphernalia of an organization is never ceasing, and is always in the background of every movement. Yet the work went on until the next

annual meeting on May 29th, 1900, and the third annual report disclosed the progress which the Union was slowly making. The Rev. Dr. Cobb was appointed Organizing Secretary, and an arrangement was made with the proprietor of the *Christian World Pulpit* which enabled the Union to secure access to its columns and its office room. The existence of the Union was clearly becoming known. Its membership showed a steady tendency to grow. Among its new members were such well known public men as Lord Avebury, Dr. Benham, Professor H. E. T. Bevan, Dr. E. A. Wallis Budge, the Rev. Dr. R. H. Charles, Professor R. K. Douglas, Sir Mountstuart Grant Duff, Canon Moore Ede, the Dean of Canterbury, the Rev. Arthur Galton, Dr. Smyth Palmer, Dr. Robertson, Sir Edward Russell, Prebendary Shelford, Archdeacon J. M. Wilson. The activities of the Union consisted mainly in meetings in towns, and a series of sermons on behalf of the Union in London.

A paragraph in the report is worth quoting :

> 'The demand for the spiritualising of all that has been revealed to us in these latter days by science, scholarship and research grows in urgency. A countless number of problems are presented to faith by the larger knowledge, the wider outlook and the loftier conception of His Being which God has been pleased to give us in this wonderful age in which we live. The Churchmen's Union realises to the full the extreme delicacy and difficulty of dealing with these problems of faith, but it realises also the fact that these problems will not wait. If loyal Churchmen do not attempt to solve them, or to show that no solution but a practical one is possible, others who are not Churchmen at all will use their own solutions to the Church's injury. Courage, Reverence and Faith should carry the Church through this task—a task which the appalling discontent of educated men with the teaching of the clergy makes more and more urgent daily. The Churchmen's Union looks for the sympathy and support of all loyal and brave Churchmen in its efforts to vindicate the Christian Faith to honest seekers after Truth.'

The report concluded with a demand for a better understanding with Nonconformists :

Thus by the year 1900 the Churchmen's Union had decided on that policy to which it has since adhered. The England of 1920 differs widely from the England of 1900. To-day the aims of the Churchmen's Union are more popular in Church circles and much nearer realization than they were in 1900; but the Union's work is not yet done, and the Church and nation still need its services.

P.H.B.

REVIEWS

PRIMITIVE CHRISTIANITY*

This important volume is the first of a projected series of studies in early Christian history, which is intended to follow up Bishop Lightfoot's editions of the Pauline Epistles, of the Ignation literature, and of Clement of Rome. It is hoped eventually to cover the whole period down to the time when Christianity was officially recognized by the Roman Empire. The Editors have started the series with a much-needed edition of the *Acts of the Apostles* in three volumes. The second volume, which is in the press, will deal with the literary criticism of *Acts*. The third volume, already in preparation, will deal with the exegesis of the text. The first volume, with which we are now concerned, discusses the Jewish, Gentile and Christian Backgrounds.

The first century is the Golden Age of Christian History. The later Christians, with whom this series will have to deal in subsequent volumes, attracted more attention from imperial administrators and men of letters than did the first Christian communities from a Gallio or a Tacitus; yet the later Christians were consciously and avowedly Epigonoi. They claimed to hold fast the Apostolic tradition, and they acknowledged the authority of the Apostolic writings. The first century became normative for the later Church, and in dealing with the later Church the historian must continually reckon with its interpretation of its own *origines*. But the interpretations and pronouncements of the undivided Church of the first four Christian centuries cannot—*pace* Bishop Gore—be accepted to-day. In particular the traditional view of the origins and character of the four canonical Gospels has been disproved. 'The great literary achievement of the last fifty years of New Testament scholarship was the discovery and general solution of the synoptic problem. It is the task of this generation to translate these results into the language of the historian; to show how literary complexities and contradictions reveal the growth of thought and the rise of institutions' (Preface). That this task has not yet been achieved is shown by the remarkable phenomenon of the 'Christ-myth' literature associated with the names of Arthur Drews, W. B. Smith and J. M. Robertson, which has attracted some attention in this country and still more in Germany. There is a masterly Appendix in this book by Prof. George Foot Moore (p. 426 *f.*) on *Nazarene and Nazareth*, in which he vindicates the tradition, which has been unreasonably disputed, that Jesus came from the Galilean village of Nazareth, and also deals faithfully with the exponents of the 'Christ-myth.' 'Whether Epiphanius's description of his Jewish Nasaræans is more trustworthy than most of what he retails about Jewish sects—the Pharisees, for instance—and whether they were really as ancient as he says, is beside the point. The sect which Smith and others describe with such particularity is a modern myth, invented like so many other myths, by false etymology, in the service of that "religionsgeschichtliche Methode" of which it may fairly be said—with Shakespeare's leave—"If this be method, there's madness in it."' But it is notoriously impossible to cure insanity by disproving the patient's delusions. We must try to secure his interest in realities, and explain to him the genesis of his own aberrations. This book aims at disclosing the factors which really determined the growth and development of the

* *The Beginnings of Christianity*. Part I, The Acts of the Apostles. Edited by F. J. Foakes Jackson, D.D., and Kirsopp Lake, D.D. Vol. I, Prolegomena 1, The Jewish, Gentile and Christian Backgrounds. Macmillan, 1920. Price 18/- net.

Christian Religion. The editors are careful to disclaim finality for their own conclusions. 'They are well aware that much of what they have written is controversial and doubtful, but they have been more anxious to state problems than to advocate theories, and have given unqualified statement to their own opinions chiefly in order to make easier a fuller discussion of the questions involved.' (p. 417.) Nevertheless they hold that 'it is becoming increasingly certain that Christianity in the first century achieved a synthesis between the Greco-Oriental and the Jewish religions in the Roman Empire. The preaching of repentance and of the Kingdom of God begun by Jesus passed into the sacramental cult of the Lord Jesus Christ.' (Preface.)

The first section of the book discusses the Jewish background. The editors lead off with a useful summary of Jewish history in New Testament times, based—not on Whiston and Schürer—but on Josephus in the Greek. The second chapter, by C. G. Montefiore on 'The Spirit of Judaism,' illustrates the development which had taken place in Jewish religion since the Persian period. First and foremost, the doctrine of a future life had become part and parcel of the Jewish Faith; secondly, the Canon of Scripture had taken shape; and thirdly, 'the fact that Yahweh was both the one and only God of the whole world, and at the same time in a very special and peculiar sense, the God of Israel brought with it many consequences and many inconsistencies,' which 'were perhaps even more acute and prominent in 50 and 90 A.D. than in 350 B.C.' (p. 41.) Some striking quotations from Rabbinic literature support Mr. Montefiore's claim that the 'legalism' of the Jews was not the unlovely thing which is so often assumed. The editors conclude the first section with two valuable chapters on 'Thought and Practice in Judaism' and 'The Dispersion' respectively. It is impossible to do justice here to this thorough review of the Jewish, and especially the Jewish-Hellenistic, world into which early Christianity expanded.

The second section, on 'The Gentile World,' consists of two chapters—one, by Prof. Duckworth, of Trinity College, Toronto, on 'The Roman Provincial System,' and the other on 'Life in the Roman Empire,' by Prof. Clifford H. Moore, of Harvard. In the former chapter we are given in outline the story of the growth of Roman Imperialism down to the end of the Republic. There follows a detailed account of Pompey's settlement of the East, and then a description of the re-organisation of the Empire by Augustus. The concluding pages discuss the provincial *concilia* of the Roman Empire—a subject of great importance for the early history of Christianity. These bodies were responsible for maintaining the *cultus* of Rome and the Emperor, but they had no political functions beyond the right of proceeding against governors who had abused their powers. Prof. Duckworth's essay contains so much valuable material and handles such an important subject, that it is the more to be regretted that he has not paid closer attention to the arrangement. After the general heading—The Roman Provincial System—the chapter opens under the sub-title: I. Its origin down to 63 B.C. No corresponding sub-titles follow, where they were presumably intended, on pp. 177, 192, 199. Three times over (pp. 193 n.1, 204, 206) we are given the details of Augustus' policy with regard to the imperial *cultus* in Asia. Twice in three pages (pp. 212, 214) we are told that the Emperors allowed the Asiatic *concilium* to meet in other cities beside Pergamum in order to appease local rivalries. In the second chapter Prof. Clifford Moore gives a useful survey of the civilization of the Greco-Roman world. He draws a living picture of the close-knit unity of the Imperial system, with its roads radiating to the ends of the world from the

Golden Milestone in the Roman Forum. Then he discusses the religious and philosophical forces which were at work in the first century of our era. Like the various denominations of to-day, the old philosophical schools were losing their identity in a common body of 'undenominational' teaching, to which Stoic, Platonic and Aristotelian ideas all contributed. It is a little surprising that the name of Posidonius, who figures so largely—perhaps too largely—in much recent work in this field, is not here mentioned.

It is the third and last section of this work, that dealing with primitive Christianity, which will arouse the keenest discussion. New historical and archæological methods are revolutionizing the study alike of classical and of Christian antiquity. In both cases the literary documents are being reviewed in closer relation to their environment. In the case of the early Church a vast amount of labour has been expended on the study of religious conditions in the Greco-Roman world in which the Christian communities grew up. The old static view which treated the New Testament as a dogmatic unity which of itself could prove or disprove the claims of rival Christian denominations is passing away, and to-day no one will get a hearing among scholars, unless he is prepared to handle the documents not only critically, but also, in the strict sense of the word, historically. The editors of this volume, who are themselves responsible for almost the whole of this last section, have tackled these problems, and they have given us a valuable insight into much recent work, together with many helpful contributions of their own, but the present writer must confess at the outset that he is not convinced by many of their generalisations.

There are four chapters in this last section. The first deals with the public teaching of Jesus; the second traces the history of the Christian community at Jerusalem, and of the beginnings of Gentile Christianity; the third outlines the development of thought on the Spirit, the Church and Baptism; while the fourth analyses the terms in which the early Christians thought of Jesus Christ. It is obvious that this review cannot hope to do justice to four long and careful Essays on these wide-reaching subjects. We must confine ourselves to a discussion of the leading idea which underlies the whole treatment.

We have already quoted a sentence from the Preface in which the editors say that 'it is becoming increasingly clear that Christianity in the first century achieved a synthesis between the Greco-Oriental and the Jewish religions in the Roman Empire.' The last section of the book develops this thesis. The authors first sketch the relations of the historic Jesus to the life of His time. Jesus, they say, did not differ from His contemporaries in His teaching about God. The God of Jesus is the God of the Jews. Jesus differed from His contemporaries on three points: resistance to the oppressors of Israel, the fate of the People of the Land, and the right observance of the Law. 'On the first point he conflicted with the tendencies to rebellion which ultimately crystallized into the patriot parties of the Jewish War in A.D. 66; on the second and third he conflicted with the scribes' (p. 289). 'The message of Jesus was not the announcement that God is a Father or King—it was rather instruction as to the kind of conduct required from the children and subjects of God, and the future in store for the obedient and disobedient' (p. 402). The Pauline Epistles and the Johannine literature carry us into a different world. We leave behind the domestic problems of Palestinian life which gave occasion to the direct teaching of Jesus, and plunge into the society of a world-wide Empire. The issue between Jew and Gentile which scarcely arose during the public life of Jesus, is now acute, and Christianity is becoming a distinct

religious system. The distinguishing mark of a Christian is possession of the Spirit. 'This is the real dividing line between the Jewish and Gentile forms of thought, and it marks very clearly the difference between the Synoptic Gospels on the one hand and the Fourth Gospel and Pauline Epistles on the other. In the Epistles the Spirit is the base of all Christian life: by it Christians have become sons of God: they are a new creation. In the Fourth Gospel only those who are born of the Spirit can enter into the Kingdom of God. Nothing of this appears in the Synoptic Gospels' (p. 326). To the new-born Gentile Churches Jesus was not 'Rabbi' as He had been to the first disciples; He was κύριος 'the lord of a circle of initiates who worshipped Him' (p. 416). To explain and describe this transition is the historical problem set by early Christianity, and at the critical step in the argument the editors of this volume appear to halt. 'There is a development or change,' they say (p. 327), 'from Jewish to Greek; but behind it is the common experience—conversion, inspiration, regeneration, or whatever name be given. The explanation changed; similar words were used, but with an altered meaning; the experience itself was the connecting link.' This sentence ought to have given us the clue, but to me at any rate it is obscure. What is the meaning of 'experience' in this connection? What is the Christian factor 'common' to the Jewish and Greek stages in the development? The preceding argument emphasizes the difference between Greek religious experience (regeneration) and Jewish religious experience (conversion or repentance), and we are not told in what the common Christian experience consisted, nor how it was related to these two types of religious experience which the authors sharply distinguish. The first Christians spoke of 'the Spirit of Jesus.' Is it not possible that in the main they were right? Is it not possible that our authors have carried too far their most necessary protest against the popular tendency to abstract the historic Jesus from His Jewish setting? When all is said and done the Jewish environment could not contain Jesus Christ. It may also be questioned whether it is possible to maintain that while Jesus differed from His contemporaries with regard to nationalism, with regard to the outcast, and with regard to the Law, He yet agreed with them in His conception of God. Do not the Gospels make it plain that He based His practice and His practical teaching on His religious conviction? It is not relevant to object that Judaism already contained the conception of God as Father and as King. It did, and it contained a number of other things too. The significance of the Gospel surely lies in its proportion. Certain ideas—*e.g.* the Kingdom of the Father—become dominant, and others—*e.g.* the Law—become secondary. This was a new setting for religion. Does it not also help to account for the transition? By their silence at least, the editors of this book appear unwilling to allow this.

The last chapter, on 'Christology,' raises similar difficulties, which it does not answer. We are given a learned analysis of the terms in which the early Christians thought of Jesus. Prof. G. F. Moore contributes a most illuminating study of the term 'Christ.' The editors then discuss the significance and origin of other titles which were applied to Jesus—Son of Man, Son of David, the suffering Servant, the prophet of Deut. xviii, and lastly, the Lord. But the writers do not go on to show us how this miscellaneous assortment of concepts came, in the minds of actual people, to describe an actual person, who had lived a historic life on earth.

Hume resolved personality into a bundle of sensations; our authors appear prepared to resolve Christianity into a bundle of concepts. 'The claim of Christianity to be a 'faith once delivered to the saints' cannot

bear the scrutiny of the historian of religions. To him it appears not a single religion, but a complex of many, justified in claiming the name of Christianity by reason of the thread of historic continuity which runs through and connects its component parts. That *quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus* can supply the answer to 'What is Christianity?' is a vain conceit: its strict application would leave us without Church, without worship and without creed. For like all religions when studied critically, Christianity is a process not a result.' (p. 265.) There is still room for a reminder that the conception of Christianity as a closed dogmatic system has had its day, but this brave apotheosis of development leaves weighty questions untouched. Why were the Gospels ever written? Why did the Fourth Evangelist meet Docetism with a return to the Word made Flesh? Why did the Church canonise the Gospels? How came it that Erasmus's edition of the Greek Testament was perhaps the most potent factor in the liberation of the modern world? Why can Dr. Foakes Jackson and Dr. Kirsopp Lake to-day count on at least a moderate interest in their own researches? We too are in 'process' and our own ideas may be, no doubt will be, subjected to analysis similar to that which we apply to the thought of other times. But experience seems to show that the stages in a historic process are conditioned not only by the antecedent conditions, but also by the 'ends,' small or great, which man tries to attain. These 'ends' are not already given in the process. In our attempt to realise 'ends' we help to direct the process itself. The Dean of St. Paul's has lately said that 'Christianity gives the world a new and characteristic standard of values.' It is the Christian standard of values which gives a certain unity to Christianity—a unity stronger than the somewhat slender 'thread of historic continuity,' which is all that the editors of this volume seem prepared to allow us with which to bind up the complex elements of historic Christianity.

J. M. Creed.

A REVISED PRAYER BOOK*

Canon Dalton has done a real service to Prayer Book revision by his issue of this handsomely printed volume. It includes an introduction, giving a brief sketch of recent proceedings in Convocation and the present position, together with an explanation and discussion of proposed alterations. The greater part of the book consists in a revised and enlarged Prayer-book, the whole being printed in full, except the Ordination Services. It must, however, be clearly understood that it does not represent the Prayer-book as it would stand if the Convocation suggestions were accepted, since Canon Dalton has also embodied many suggestions of his own. And here, apart from the merits of these proposals, we have a general quarrel on grounds of editing. It is very difficult to be sure under which head any given alteration falls. In the Introduction we have to remind ourselves of a very arbitrary distinction between 'proposals' and 'suggestions,' the former referring to the recommendations of Convocation, the latter to Canon Dalton's, and in the body of the book we have to watch for the appearance of an obelisk, which is the sign of a 'suggestion.' It is often not clear, *e.g.* in the Prayer of Consecration, whether such an obelisk covers only a few words, or the whole prayer, *i.e.* whether the text represents a Convocation proposal modified by Canon Dalton's suggestion, or only the latter. The book might have

* The Book of Common Prayer: an edition containing proposals and suggestions, compiled by J. N. Dalton, M.A., F.S.A., Canon of Windsor. Cambridge, 1920.

suffered in appearance, but it would have gained greatly in usefulness, if the two kinds of changes had been represented by different type.

To pass to the substance of the changes, this is hardly the place to discuss once more the merits of the familiar Convocation proposals such as the alternative use of vestments or of the revised Canon in the Communion Service, or the permissory use of the Athanasian Creed on Trinity Sunday only. But we are bound to remark on the unduly cautious character of the revision in general, especially in the Occasional Offices where changes are most urgently called for. Something is done in the way of providing alternative and additional Prayers in the Burial Service, but the Baptismal Offices remain unchanged except for trivial verbal alterations such as the substitution of 'sin' for 'sins,' and the omission of 'vulgar tongue.' In the Marriage Service certain words are omitted from the Preface, the child-bearing prayer is modified, and the somewhat unfortunate reference to Abraham and Sarah is dropped. However, under present conditions we must be thankful for what we can get, and at least most of the changes are in the right direction.

Canon Dalton's own 'suggestions' deserve greater consideration as being less familiar. They fall under three heads. (1) Incidental verbal changes; some of these are important and good, such as the omission of the promise to obey in the Marriage Service. The restoration of 'the resurrection of the flesh' in the Apostles' Creed is no doubt historically accurate; while it will not make it easier for the laity to join in the Creed, it strengthens the claim of the liberal to a wide latitude of interpretation.

(2) Additional prayers and canticles. Extra prayers and thanksgivings for special occasions, with introductory versicles and responses, are added to those already adopted by Convocation. Of these, some are better than others: many of them are too wordy, though the subjects are good. If we are going to pray 'Lift up our minds and our hearts to realize unselfishly what any re-arrangement of the industrial system may require' (!), we must at least avoid combining such sentences with phrases from the classical religious phraseology. The proposed Old Testament Canticles are not very impressive. Admitting the need of variety, it would be better boldly to go outside the Bible and to include literary masterpieces from other sources, following the precedent set by the *Te Deum*.

Much space is devoted to extra Collects, Epistles and Gospels for week-days and for Black-Letter Saints' Days, a feature which will not affect one in a thousand of ordinary Church-goers. This section strikes one as pedantic and antiquarian. The Collects themselves are often very inferior. The opening of the Christmas Eve Collect, 'O God who makest us glad with the yearly expectation of our redemption' suggests that we are periodically redeemed, or hope to be redeemed, once a year. And the Collects for the Minor Saints constantly fall into the trap of giving information to the congregation under the guise of prayer to God; they are of the type of the famous 'O God who knowest that China is a country of 4,000,000 square miles and of 400,000,000 souls, of whom but a small proportion believe in Thee.'

(3) A fresh translation of the Psalter. This strikes us as far the most important part of Canon Dalton's work. Only those who have tried it can realize the difficulty of the task, and it is a real service that it should have been attempted once more. Headings are provided, and every device is used to bring out the meaning and structure—paragraphs, indented refrains, inverted commas, and so on. Such a touch as the capital T to the repeated 'Terrible' in Ps. 76 makes all the difference.

As a whole, the translation is often vigorous and happy, and it grows on one the more it is used, but there are naturally many openings for criticism. The renderings sometimes remind us too much of the explanations of words which we find in commentaries: 'the blustering throng of the workers of iniquity' (64, 2); 'surely for mere vanity do they boisterously toil and moil' (39, 7); 'they gather them together in marauding bands' (94, 21). Words are introduced which do not harmonise with the general style of the translation; 'even the refractory are content' (68, 19); 'through my constant sorrow and grief I am now but skin and bone' (102, 5); 'it is like the aroma of the sacred oil upon the head' (133, 2); 'non-entities' (97, 7). Again the translation tends to become a wordy paraphrase: 'all the foundations of the earth, the principles of the social order, are out of course' (82, 5); 'thou hast anointed my head as of an honoured guest with oil' (23, 5); 'uphold me with a spirit ever eager and ready to do right' (51, 12); 'to execute judgement upon the nations and retribution upon the peoples; that right may have the overhand of wrong at last' ([*i.e.* 149] 49, 7). This last example, in which the concluding clause is simply a comment added by the translator, is paralleled in 68, 24 ('should not I hate the ways of them, O Lord, that hate thee?') and elsewhere where similar attempts are made to give a moralised turn to imprecations. On the other hand, in 69 and 109 the offending verses are omitted altogether.

Greatly daring, Canon Dalton has even attempted to reproduce in English the acrostic (110) and alphabetical psalms. The necessity of beginning with the right letters leads to awkward forcing of words and order, but it has the advantage of showing the reader the structure, and of warning him against expecting too close a sequence or development of thought.

It has seemed worth while to make these criticisms just because the translation is often so good and because the experiment is so completely worth while. One would gather that Canon Dalton's main principle has been at all costs to give the reader something he can understand, and here he will have the laity with him. They desire that the Bible as used in Public Worship should at least be intelligible.

C. W. Emmet.

A TONIC FOR FAILING HEARTS*

Dr. Hutton's 'Four Studies in the Literature of Religion and Reconstruction' invite at once applause and criticism. They are models among University Sermons: learned but never dull, racy but never trivial, a rich collection of literary jewels which reflect the age-long pilgrimage towards the City of God; and, withal, a thesis consistently sustained that 'the Hope of Man' is the Catholic Church of Christ. There is in these sermons something of the 'glow and vehemence' which Walter Pater remarked in Pico, who was the spiritual son of Savonarola; and the author's picture of the process of the Florentine's quest might seem to suggest the form and direction of his present work:

> 'Pico began his quest by the labour of the head: it ended, as that quest to be successful ever must end, in the heart. Is it fanciful to think that, as he turned over the manuscripts for which Christendom had been ransacked to store his mind with the thought of past ages, as he passed through the streets gay with the "vanities" of fickle

* *The Hope of Man:* Being Sermons preached before the University of Oxford. By William Holden Hutton, D.D., Dean of Winchester.

> Florence, or, in his last days, as he looked down from Fiesole over the pine-trees of Boccacio to the fair city and the winding Arno in the valley, the light had come to him from the Cross . . . ? ' (p. 48).

Thus perhaps would a biographer seek to delineate the religious development of a Christian Humanist. But here the preacher, applying the idea, reverses the process. To lead his hearers to the great conclusion that ' Christianity alone is the religion of Hope,' and that ' the millenium can only be achieved when man accepts the Gospel of the Son of God,' he lays under contribution the literature of more than Christendom and shows that in the light of the Cross all history may be applied to explain the Religion of the Incarnation.

These sermons do not omit a suggestion of anti-Protestant polemic. We will not be lured into any discussion of the multifarious meanings of party catch-words. But the Dean comes into collision with the report of a paper read at the Churchmen's Union Conference at Cambridge in 1917, where a discussion of the Kingdom of God admitted the statement that ' development for some time past has been in favour of the Free Protestant Churches.'[1] In the individual development of local Churches he can find little hope of a uniform witness to the Gospel of Christ. ' A *uniform* witness.' But do the diverse gifts of the Holy Spirit really require uniformity? Christ's Holy Catholic Church, which Liberal Churchmen at any rate will be prepared to define as ' the whole congregation of Christian peoples dispersed throughout the whole world,' takes varieties of form corresponding with varieties of national and local temperament and character. It is not, therefore, and necessarily, weakened in moral witness.

Dr. Hutton does not offer, or pretend to offer, any new Gospel for the dissipation of the present discontents. He is well content with the old, and so are we; but we should be disposed to urge that its versatility extends as well to expression as to application. But if here and there the Dean seems a trifle obscurantist, we are grateful to him for the fine tonic of hopefulness which his collection of sermons conveys. There is a breezy optimism which colours his Introduction, and a reproof to those Churchmen who would seem to ' despair of the republic, at least in its present form.' He remarks, at the time of writing (January, 1920), the apparent unpopularity of the Coalition, and protests that ' the present Government has done remarkably well in face of an extraordinary combination of difficulties, political, economic and military. . . . To compare it with the Government in power after Waterloo is to see at once the enormous superiority in tact, wisdom, courage, and sagacity, of the present ministry,' of whom ' it is difficult to deny that they know their own minds and go their own way towards a definite end ' (pp. xxvi, xxvii). But the Dean does ' not intend to offer a clergyman's opinions on politics.' He will not join, with a number of clergy, the ranks of the ' pedantic philosophers and political doctrinaires '; for, as he puts it with admirable sense:

> ' It must be admitted that the clergy have at the present time a tedious tendency to express their opinions with a lugubrious flippancy which leads to less importance being attached to their judgement than it deserves. In any case we may be thankful that England is not likely to be governed by an ostrich from the Athenæum ' (p. xxviii).

[1] Quoted by Dr. Hutton from the *Yorkshire Post*. (N.B.—An inspection of the published papers of the Cambridge Conference has not disclosed the precise reference).

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